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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

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GENERAL FISHERIES COMMISSION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

Rome, Italy, 7-10 July 1998

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PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the final version of the report adopted in Rome by the twenty-third session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on 10 July 1998.

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-third session of the GFCM was attended by delegates from twenty out of the twenty-two members of the Commission. The main issues discussed during the meeting were the scale of contribution to an autonomous budget, and the structure and functions of the newly established Scientific Advisory Committee. The twenty-third session decided to entrust the Scientific Advisory Committee with technical and scientific functions of the Commission. The same Committee was also instructed to decide on Sub-Committees that it may wish to establish to support its technical work. A Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 1998-99 was also discussed and approved.

Distribution:

Participants in the Session
GFCM Mailing List
FAO Regional and Sub-Regional Fisheries Officers

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OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) held its Twenty-third Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy, from 7 to 10 July 1998.

2. The Session was attended by delegates from 20 members of the Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and by observers from the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (ICAMAS), the European Bureau for Conservation and Development, Greenpeace International and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The list of delegates and observers is given in Appendix B to this report.

3. The meeting was chaired by Mr F. Montanaro Mifsud (Malta) who opened the Session by stating that delegates were invited to take decisions on two major issues: the scheme and scale of contribution to an autonomous budget for GFCM, and the structure and functions of the newly created Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). He invited the members to express their reaction to the circular letter sent to them by the Secretariat concerning the amendments to GFCM Agreement.

4. The Chairman then invited Mr M. Hayashi, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries Department, to address the meeting.

5. On behalf of the Director-General of FAO, Dr Jacques Diouf, Mr M. Hayashi welcomed participants and particularly the delegation of the European Community (EC), which had just become a member of the Commission. He stressed the necessity for the Commission to reach agreement on the scale of contributions to the autonomous budget and on the structure and functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

6. Mr Hayashi stated that the autonomous budget might not be in operation for some time and that during the transitional period sufficient resources, both financial and human, must be found outside FAO's regular budget allocations in order to cover the expanded activities as envisaged in the amended GFCM Agreement.

7. The Assistant Director-General underlined the need for members to implement the decisions of GFCM in the most efficient manner possible. He acknowledged the financial contribution of Spain to the holding of the Second Session of GFCM Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics and the offer of Italy to finance consultations on the application of Article 9 (Aquaculture Development) of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in the Mediterranean region.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. The Agenda was adopted with slight amendments to the Provisional Agenda, as shown in Appendix A to this report. The main change was the addition of a new item (item 7): Medium- and Long-term Programme of Work for GFCM. The Session also agreed to have preliminary discussions on the scheme and scale of contributions before reviewing the item on the structure and functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE DECISIONS OF THE TWENTY-SECOND SESSION

(a) Amendments to GFCM Agreement and the Rules of Procedure

9. In accordance with Article II-7 of GFCM Agreement, the Director-General of FAO approved the amendments to the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the Twenty-second Session of GFCM. In accordance with Article X of the Agreement, the FAO Council at its Hundred and Thirteenth Session (Rome, Italy, November 1997), approved the amendments to the Agreement which, accordingly, entered into force with respect to those provisions not involving new obligations.

10. The Secretariat informed the Commission that a circular letter was sent to all members of the Commission in February 1998, transmitting copies of the amended Agreement and Rules of Procedure and inviting their acceptance of those amendments which involved new obligations for them in the Agreement.

11. The Commission noted that no acceptances have been received.

(b) Resolutions related to fisheries management

12. The Commission reviewed the status of implementation of Resolutions 97/1 and 97/3. In this connection the delegation of Malta informed the Commission of the use being made by certain neighboring countries of aerial spotting to fish tuna around Malta during the month of June. The delegation suggested to the Commission to consider extending the ban on the use of aerial spotting over a three-month period (June-July-August). Some delegations pointed out that such an extension would need to be carefully assessed.

13. The delegation of the European Community stated that the implementation of GFCM Resolutions was important and called on members of GFCM to report on the follow-up to the Resolutions. He informed the Commission that the European Community had incorporated GFCM Resolutions 97/1 and 97/3 into the EC Regulations.

14. The observer from ICCAT noted that cooperation between GFCM and his organization was satisfactory and resulted in the adoption by GFCM of the ICCAT recommendations on the management of large pelagic species, and that it is important that such recommendations, including those of previous GFCM meetings, are implemented.

15. The delegation of Tunisia, referring to the issue raised by the delegation of Malta, stated that Tunisia was taking the necessary measures to comply with all GFCM Resolutions.

16. The delegation of Spain confirmed its full respect for the recommendations approved by GFCM and informed the Commission that Spain was setting up a surveillance mechanism based on aerial and maritime patrolling.

17. The delegation of Morocco reported that the fishermen of its country, who were using driftnets, were operating small fishing crafts and that the question of length of driftnets did not apply. Concerning the fishing of blufin tuna, the delegation informed the Meeting that Moroccan fishermen did not use either purse seines or aerial spotting; instead, they used more selective gear such as fixed traps (madragues) and ground longlines.

18. The delegation of Turkey stated that Turkey was taking the necessary measures to comply with GFCM Resolutions and that aerial spotting was not used in Turkey.

19. The delegation of Greece stated that national legislation concerning the use of purse seiners in the capture of bluefin tuna was more restrictive than EC legislation and that bluefin tuna fishing is done by selective gear such as longlines.

20. The delegation of Israel reported that its country had banned the use of driftnets as of June 1998.

21. The delegation of Italy informed the Commission that Resolutions 97/1 and 97/3 were already enforced on the basis of the national legislation and the EC Regulation No.894/97, and that measures have been taken to strengthen the control and patrolling activities.

22. The delegation of Libya stated that there were no driftnets used in Lybia and that the use of aerial spotting could not take place because of reasons well known to the Commission.

23. The delegation of Japan stated that its country had not authorized its national fleet to be engaged in purse seining in the Mediterranean.

24. The observer from Greenpeace International stated that his organization recorded non-compliance cases concerning Resolution 97/1 on the use of driftnets in the Mediterranean during the year 1998. A report on this issue was put at the disposal of delegates.

25. The observer from WWF drew the attention of the Commission to the need for stricter implementation of GFCM Resolutions by all members in order to avoid a transfer of prohibited gear and additional fishing effort from one area to another in the Mediterranean.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

(a) Second Session of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics (Rome, Italy, 2-5 March 1998)

26. The Commission reviewed and endorsed the report of the Second Session of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics held in Rome, Italy, from 2 to 5 March 1998.

27. In particular, the Commission stressed the need to improve the overall quality and reliability of GFCM statistical and information systems so as to enable the Commission to base its management decisions in the future on the best scientific evidence available.

28. The Secretariat informed the Commission that the FAO/COPEMED project, financed by Spain, was prepared to assist in conducting a feasibility study of a data base on social and economic indicators in the Western Mediterranean. In this context, the Italian delegation emphasized the need for promoting the production of integrated data and indicators on fisheries that would facilitate scientific exchanges among biologists and social scientists.

29. The Commission agreed to review the future of the Working Party under Agenda item 5 - Options for structure and functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee (see paragraphs 39 and 42).

(b) Aquaculture activities

30. The Secretariat introduced the report on aquaculture activities which had been conducted since the Twenty-second Session of GFCM. These were related to the work of the three networks, TECAM, SELAM and SIPAM. No activities were carried out for the EAM network due to a lack of financing by the Mediterranean Action Plan (PAP/RAC). TECAM and SELAM activities covered two advanced courses on off-shore mariculture and hatchery techniques, two workshops on aquaculture planning and aquaculture feed manufacturing practices, and the preparation of the synopses on the new species under culture. For the SIPAM network, a meeting of the national coordinators discussed progress achieved with the utilization of the new software.

31. The Secretariat further reported that the SIPAM regional coordinator visited Turkey to revise the situation of the network in the country. Negotiations had commenced with Algeria, Bulgaria and Libya regarding the possibility of their joining the SIPAM network. A third release of the SIPAM regional data base was issued by the network and a new cooperation agreement with ICRAM (Italy) was established to facilitate the 1998 annual meeting of the national coordinators and for the preparation and testing of a new version of the analytical module APS. An Internet based version of the SIPAM has been produced by FAO as a prototype to be included under the WAICENT site of FAO, and a joint workshop with the SELAM network and the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) was held to discuss cooperation for the downloading of the FEAP data bases into SIPAM. Following a proposal by the Italian Government, an *ad hoc* consultation on Article 9 (Aquaculture Development) of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) is being organized, entirely funded by Italy. The consultation should take place in early 1999.

32. The delegation of Italy stated that the future of the fisheries sector in the Mediterranean was an integral programme where aquaculture development could play an important role in the reconversion process of fishermen, and a system approach to planning the future was recommended. The delegation of the European Community supported the statements of the Italian delegation and expressed interest in the intensification of the level of cooperation in aquaculture in the context of GFCM.

(c) COPEMED progress report

33. The Secretary explained that the FAO-COPEMED Project was a five-year project funded by the Spanish Government, with a total budget of five million dollars. The goal of COPEMED was to help the participating countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Malta, Italy, France and Spain) in establishing a coordinated scheme for generating scientific criteria, and recommendations that permit application of the most adequate strategy for the optimum management of the resources. COPEMED's aim would be to help GFCM in operational and practical activities in order to facilitate the achievement of its goals.

34. The COPEMED Director presented the actual state of the project and possible future activities. The main issues that COPEMED was dealing with were: information systems; research and training; and cooperation and coordination.

35. The COPEMED Director also informed the Commission that a critical analysis of the project would be carried out at the end of 1998, and the question of how COPEMED could interact with the Scientific Advisory Committee would be discussed by the Steering Committee.

OPTIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)

36. This agenda item was introduced on the basis of document GFCM/XXIII/98/3. Reference was also made in the course of the discussions to specific proposals presented by the EC. This document suggested three options concerning the collection of statistical data and socio-economic analysis on fisheries management, and activities related to stock assessments. While presenting the document, the Secretariat emphasized the necessary link between the number of possible subsidiary bodies of SAC and the need to have sufficient financial and human resources to organize and backstop such meetings and activities.

37. The Commission reviewed the options proposed in the Secretariat document and the EC proposal, and agreed that SAC should be in a position to provide independent scientific advice free of any political consideration, composed of specialists. It was stressed that SAC should give advice on the questions that might be put to it by the Commission.

38. The Commission confirmed that SAC should meet once a year, in principle one month before the main Session of GFCM. The Commission further agreed that SAC should, as far as possible, reach its conclusions by consensus and would use the four official languages of GFCM, while its subsidiary bodies would decide on the language(s) to be used. The Commission requested the Secretariat to advise the Commission on possible amendments to the Rules of Procedures to incorporate consensus into the rules governing the operation of SAC, in particular with reference to matters of scientific character.

39. The Commission was of the opinion that SAC should establish subsidiary bodies, taking into account the special needs of Mediterranean fisheries. The following ideas for the structures of its subsidiary bodies were proposed:

- a sub-committee for stock assessment (SCSA), supported by working groups related to species and/or areas including the joint GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species;

- a sub-committee on fishery statistics (SCFS), which should be considered as one of the priorities; and

- a sub-committee for economic and social science (SCES), which may create *ad hoc* working groups as appropriate.

40. Some delegations suggested that subregional Working Groups, particularly relative to Eastern Mediterranean fisheries, were desirable, and that SAC should consider the suggestion.

41. In relation to SCSA, some delegates emphasized that a critical issue would be to define adequate management units, taking into consideration (i) the best available information on marine resources and sub-regional specificity.

42. In view of the possible establishment of SCFS and SCES, the Commission decided to abolish the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics.

43. For the first session of SAC, the Commission agreed on the terms of reference (see Appendix D). It was decided that SAC should first review the current situation and future directions of its work with respect to availability of data and methodologies, and that it should provide concrete advice to the Commission, as feasible, on the following questions:

a. definition of appropriate management units for Mediterranean fisheries;

b. definition of the appropriate parameters to use when measuring fishing effort;

c. identification of the current situation and available information on stock assessment for Mediterranean resources; and

d. organization of its future work: structure, data bases and functioning.

44. The Commission further agreed that the First Session of SAC would take place in FAO Headquarters (Rome, Italy) from 7 to 11 December 1998, and that the provisional agenda would be prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the above-mentioned mandate. The Commission acknowledged and endorsed the offer of Italy to finance 50 percent of the cost of convening the first meeting of SAC. The European Community announced its intention to consider favourably its contribution to this financing. It was understood that each delegation would bear the costs of its participation in the meeting.

45. The Commission also decided that the Second Session of SAC would take place in 1999, one month before the Twenty-fourth Session of GFCM. Terms of Reference are given in Appendix D.

46. Several delegations insisted on a proper appraisal of the costs associated with a possible structure of SAC. In particular, it was stressed that, as far as possible, SAC should rely on existing inputs from other organizations in the region. In this connection, Turkey offered the use of its centre at Beymelek, if the Committee considered it useful.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET FOR 1998-99

47. The Secretariat introduced document GFCM/XXIII/98/4 which proposed a work programme for the intersessional period. The attention of the Commission was drawn to document GFCM/XXIII/8/Inf.3 which outlined a proposed long- to medium-term programme for the Commission.

48. The Commission noted that the intersessional period was to be considered as transitional since the autonomous budget might not become operational before December 1999. Consequently, it was pointed out that the proposed programme and related activities were indicative and that the implementation would require extra-budgetary funding.

49. The observer from CIHEAM stated that there might be some budgetary limitations during the intersessional period with regards to the financial support provided by the CIHEAM to implement the activities of the networks of the Committee on Aquaculture. He further invited the Commission to take into consideration this situation while discussing the budget of the Commission.

50. The delegation of Spain observed that the proposed programme of work should be balanced, giving equal importance to the various sectors of activities. He invited the GFCM members to continue their efforts to improve the quality of their data. He further suggested that statistics should be given a high priority in the work of SAC.

51. The delegation of Morocco suggested that future programmes of work should indicate (i) activities to be undertaken with funds from FAO, (ii) activities to be financed through the contributions of members to the autonomous budget, and (iii) activities to be carried our with voluntary contributions. He further suggested that emphasis should be laid on scientific and technical workshops. A number of delegations supported this suggestion.

52. The delegation of Tunisia supported the views expressed by the delegation of Spain, adding that the experience from restructuring fisheries related activities of the Commission might be helpful in this connection.

53. The delegation of Romania regretted that the Technical Consultation on Stock Assessment in the Black Sea, referred to in document GFCM/XXIII/98/4, might be postponed due to financial restrictions.

54. The delegation of Tunisia suggested that during the transitional period and until an autonomous budget was made operational, priorities should be given to the holding of the statutory meetings. The Commission endorsed this proposal and agreed that the meetings shown in the Table below should constitute the core activities of the Commission during 1998/99.

Meeting	*Venue*	*Tentative date*	*Source of funds*
GFCM/ICCAT joint Working Group on Large Pelagics	Genoa, Italy	7-12 Sept. 1998	Italy
First Session of SAC	FAO, Rome	7-11 Dec. 1998	Italy
Expert Consult on the implementation of Article 9 (Aquaculture Dev.) of CCRF	Rome, Italy	March 1999	Italy
Special session of GFCM (scale of contributions)	?	Spring 1999	?
Second session of SAC	?	May 1999	Italy
Second session of the Committee on Aquaculture	?	May 1999	?
Twenty-fourth Session of GFCM	?	June 1999	?

55. The Commission welcomed the offer of the Government of Italy to fund most of its intersessional activities for 1998/99.

56. The delegation of France informed the Commission that, in view of the new priorities identified by the Commission during the intersessional period, France would reconsider its offer made at the Twenty-second Session of GFCM Session to fund the Second Session of the Committee on Aquaculture.

57. The Commission agreed that workshops and training courses would be organized by aquaculture networks, should funds become available. It also agreed that the meetings of subsidiary bodies, which SAC might establish, would also be organized subject to the availability of funds.

A MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM WORK PROGRAMME OF GFCM

58. The issue was briefly reviewed, with reference to GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.5, which had already been presented at the Twenty-second Session of the Commission (GFCM/XXII/97/3). This document emphasized the need to decide on priorities and to schedule accomplishments by setting definite goals to be achieved by cooperative action of the Commission and its members.

59. The delegation of the European Community generally agreed with the goals described in the paper, which were expressed without any order of priority, as follows:

a. For demersal resources, future emphasis should be placed on fisheries management by means of effort control, in combination with technical measures such as seasonal or permanent fishery closures.

b. Catch limits should be placed on limiting bluefin tuna catches in the Mediterranean in conformity with ICCAT regulations. Priority should now be placed on assessing swordfish stocks and bringing them under management in cooperation with ICCAT.

c. Management of small pelagic fish stocks should not be neglected and, in fact, management schemes should be introduced following, among others, precautionary approaches.

d. A control scheme should be developed concerning, in particular, the activities of vessels fishing under flags of convenience in the Mediterranean.

e. Fishery regulations currently applied by GFCM members should be compiled and harmonized as much as possible, following debate on this issue at GFCM and its subsidiary bodies.

f. Increased coordination and cooperation in fisheries research between members.

g. Statistics collection should be standardized and the Secretariat should maintain relevant data bases of information and report regularly on its contents.

h. An integrated systems-based approach to fisheries management should be developed, combining different sectors, for example, through integrated coastal area management techniques.

60. On the issue of management of small pelagics, the delegation of Spain informed the Commission that recently there had been a reversal of trends with respect to these species in Spanish waters, with declines in sardine stocks and increases in warm water species such as sardinella.

61. The delegation of Spain also urged that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the precautionary approach be implemented in order to protect biodiversity in the Mediterranean, especially for marine vertebrates, including sharks, monk seals and marine turtles, and to integrate ecological information into fisheries management measures. The need to place emphasis on small pelagic research and management was also stressed by the delegation of Libya.

62. The delegation of Tunisia agreed that the principle of closed seasons merited further examination, but would need to be adopted to the specificity of each country. The delegation recommended also that for areas of sensitive biological environments or critical habitats, such as the Gulf of Gabes, selective fishing methods should be found, or adopted to the situation. The delegation suggested that one benefit of an autonomous GFCM budget would be to permit specific cooperative research projects to be carried out.

63. The delegation of Malta emphasized the need to control tuna purse seining, initially, perhaps, by means of a closed season for fishing. The delegation emphasized that following the precautionary approach, absence of scientific research should not be an excuse for management inaction, which could have serious consequences on stocks.

64. The observer from ICCAT commented on document GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.5 and the eight considerations presented by the European Community. He emphasized the importance of GFCM monitoring compliance with all resolutions of GFCM on large pelagics. He considered that some permanent mechanism for that purpose might be needed in the Commission's structure in future to allow SAC to review the effectiveness of the regulations. He also informed the meeting that ICCAT adopted a reduction in catches in the east bluefin stocks in 1994 and requested GFCM and its member countries to comply with this regulation. So far, ICCAT had not received any response to this request and regrettably noted that some GFCM countries increased their bluefin catches, instead of decreasing from the level of the 1993-94 catch. He again requested the collaboration of all GFCM members. He informed the Commission that, in 1996, ICCAT recommended that all the contracting parties prohibit the import of bluefin products from Belize, Honduras and Panama, as they had been fishing in the Mediterranean Sea in a manner that undermined the effectiveness of ICCAT regulatory measures, and had not rectified this practice even after warning. He also commented that all recommendations on conservation measures should be harmonized between the two organizations.

65. The observer from WWF agreed with the emphasis in GFCM document on the need to apply the 1995 UN agreement on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, which had so far not been addressed by GFCM. He stressed the need for a firm scheduling of

activities, with an increased emphasis on enforcement of regulations and compliance with GFCM resolutions, and to the use of closed areas for fisheries management.

SCALE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO AN AUTONOMOUS BUDGET

66. The Secretariat introduced the options for the scheme and scale of contributions for an autonomous budget on the basis of document GFCM/XXIII/98/5. The Commission reviewed the various options, and as the matter was very intricate, an *ad hoc* working group was set up to review in depth possible options and report to the Commission.

67. The *ad hoc* working group met three times and produced new options for the calculation of contributions. Most of the delegations agreed to the three components of the scale which consisted of a basic fee, a second charge related to national wealth, and a third one related to fish production (capture fisheries and marine aquaculture) from the region covered by GFCM Agreement.

68. The Commission could not reach a consensus on the weights that should be attributed to the three components. It requested the Secretariat to prepare a new proposal as a basis for further negotiations, taking into account statements made during the Session and any further written submissions from members. It decided that a special session of the Commission be convened to address and conclude the debate on this specific issue.

69. The Commission has set up an *ad hoc* working group to prepare an indicative budget for the Commission. The proposed budget should clearly indicate both the contribution of FAO and that of members of the Commission. The Commission took note of the indicative autonomous budget shown in Appendix E. The Commission felt that this indicative budget could be useful as a basis for subsequent discussions on the autonomous budget.

ANY OTHER MATTER

70. No other matters were raised.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

71. The Commission decided to hold a special session on the scheme and scale of contributions for an autonomous budget in Spring 1999 and the Twenty-fourth Session in June 1999. The Commission took note that no source of funds had yet been identified for these two Sessions.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

72. The report was adopted on 10 July 1998.

APPENDIX A

Agenda

1. Opening of the Session

2. Adoption of the Agenda and arrangements for the Session

3. Follow-up to the decisions of the Twenty-second Session

   - Amendments to the GFCM Agreement
   - Resolutions related to fisheries management

4. Intersessional activities

   - Report on the second session of the Working Party on Fishery Economics and Statistics, and

   - Aquaculture activities

5. Options for structure and functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee and preparation for its first session Terms of Reference for the First and Second Sessions.

6. Programme of work and budget for 1998 and 1999

   - Activities financed by the FAO Regular Programme
   - Activities to be funded through extra-budgetary resources

7. Medium- and Long-term Programme of Work for GFCM

8. Scale of contributions to an autonomous budget

9. Any other matter

10. Date and place of the Twenty-fourth Session

11. Adoption of the report

APPENDIX B

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APPENDIX C

List of Documents

GFCM/XXIII/98/1	Agenda
GFCM/XXIII/98/2	Intersessional activities: • follow-up to the decisions of the Twenty-second Session of GFCM • Report on the Second Session of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics and on aquaculture activities
GFCM/XXIII/98/3	Options for the structure and functions of the Scientific Advisory Committee and preparation for its First Session
GFCM/XXIII/98/4	Programme of work and budget for 1998-99
GFCM/XXIII/98/5	Scale of contributions to an autonomous budget
GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.1	List of documents
GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.2	List of participants
GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.3	Report of the Second Session of the Working Party on Fisheries Economics and Statistics (March 1998)
GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.4	Report of the Twenty-second Session of GFCM (October 1997)
GFCM/XXIII/98/Inf.5	Medium- and long-term perspectives and priorities for management of the Mediterranean fisheries

APPENDIX D

Terms of Reference

First Session

The Scientific Advisory Committee is requested to review the current situation and future direction of its work with respect to availability of data and methodologies, and to provide concrete advice to the Commission, as feasible, on the following questions:

1. Definition of the appropriate management units for Mediterranean fisheries

These management units should take into account and, where possible, conciliate the following aspects:

- the distribution of unit biological stocks for the main species;
- the existing statistical areas;
- the occurrence of homogeneous fleets;
- the occurrence of consolidated scientific and technical cooperation.

2. Definition of the parameters to express fishing effort

These parameters should be simple, workable and applicable for vessels longer than 15 m, on the basis of individual vessels. For smaller units, the parameters chosen should allow their monitoring on the basis of sampling procedures.

3. Identification of the current situation and available information on stock assessment

- Stocks or areas where catch, effort and biological data are collected on a routine basis;
- fisheries or fleets for which economic data are collected on a routine basis;
- inventory of research vessel surveys;
- inventory of well established groups of scientists meeting regularly for stock assessment or for economical analysis.

4. Organization of future work: structure, data bases and functioning

- Working groups, study groups, secretariat;
- data bases: creation and maintenance;

- organization of future meetings, allocation of tasks;
- links with environmental conventions.

Second Session

The Scientific Advisory Committee is requested to provide advice on the following questions:

1. Evaluation (jointly with ICCAT) of Mediterranean swordfish

Evaluation of the state of the stock based on the best available information.

2. General appraisal of the level of knowledge on the state of the different groups of stocks, according to the management units identified

For each management unit identified, report on the level of knowledge and, where appropriate, advice on the state of the fishery.

3. The problem of juveniles: pros and cons of minimum mesh sizes and minimum landing sizes as compared to closed areas/seasons

Given the practical difficulties associated to the application of minimum landing sizes for certain species, compare the relative merits of the establishment of certain areas of high concentration of juveniles where the fishing activity would be seasonally or permanently banned.

4. Identification of areas/seasons of high concentration of juveniles

In the context of the above advice, identify areas and seasons of high concentration of juveniles of the most important commercial species.

APPENDIX E

Proposal for a GFCM Annual Autonomous Budget (in US$)

	Fisheries Department Contribution	Member Countries Contribution	TOTAL
Secretariat			
- Secretary	136 380	0	136 380
- Other secretariat staff (1)	0	360 000	360 000
- Technical support from FI	137 000	0	137 000
- Overheads	10 000	20 000	30 000
- Office equipment (2)	5 000	0	5 000
- Secretariat travels	15 000	15 000	30 000
Statutory meetings (3)			
- Commission	0	35 000	35 000
- Scientific Advisory Committee	0	23 000	23 000
- Aquaculture	0	12 000	12 000
Other meetings			
- SAC sub-committees (4)	0	60 000	60 000
- Consultancies	0	15 000	15 000
- Workshops/training (aquaculture networks) (5)	0	140 000	140 000
- Workshops/training (fisheries) (6)	0	70 000	70 000
Meetings reports, documents and techn. pap.	20 000	60 000	80 000
Total	323 380	810 000	1 133 380

(1) Equivalent to two regular staff posts (P3/P4) and three clerk posts
(2) Update of equipment costs
(3) Translation mainly
(4) Equivalent to three meetings
(5) Equivalent to four meetings
(6) Equivalent to two meetings

The twenty-third session of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) was attended by delegates from 20 of the 22 members of the commission. The main issues discussed during the meeting were the scale of contributions to an autonomous budget and the structure and functions of the newly established Scientific Advisory Committee. The twenty-third session decided to entrust the Scientific Advisory Committee with technical and scientific functions of GFCM. The same committee was also instructed to decide on subcommittees that it may wish to establish to support its technical work. A Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 1998-1999 was also discussed and approved.

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